

Vanishing Culture Project
Mark Taylor Oral History
Date of Interview: May 26, 1993
Location: Cortez, Florida
Length of Interview: 01:09:31
Interviewer: MJ – Michael Jepson
Transcriber: NCC

Michael Jepson: Just pick out a couple of places that you know.

Mark Taylor: All right. Well –

MJ: I'll put a number on it.

MT: Okay. We can start. Let's see past here. Right along here is Wild Irishman's Cut.

MJ: This area right here?

MT: Yes.

MJ: I didn't know that.

MT: Yes.

MJ: So, I'll put a circle right in there.

MT: Yes.

MJ: Let's put number one. Why is it called Wild Irishman's Cut?

Rusty Taylor: A guy used to live there back in the twenties and thirties. He'd get drunk. He'd come down there and raise the devil. [laughter] These guys just named it Wild Irishman's Cut after him, Wild Irishman [laughter].

MJ: Did you ever know his name?

RT: Yes, I did. But I don't remember. I knew him pretty well, him and his wife, because in his older days, I was an iceman on that beach for about three years in [19]40, [19]41, [19]42. I delivered ice to them. I was just trying to think of their names. Of course, when he got old, he settled down. He quit his drinking, wild ways and all. But that name stuck, Wild Irishman Cut.

MJ: Is there a cut there that goes through?

MT: Yes. Yes, there is. There's a ditch right along, just away from the woods.

MJ: Does it run north and south or east and west?

MT: No. It runs –

RT: North.

MT: – north and south. See, just like this, right here. Then it stops. Then this is –

RT: The trailer park.

MT: – the trailer park.

MJ: Okay.

MT: But it runs up here, and then it goes into flat again. It comes up here in an L and comes out.

MJ: So, is it sort of a hole there?

MT: It's actually a little channel that runs in there.

MJ: A little channel?

MT: Yes. That's always been the Wild Irishman's Cut.

MJ: Is that where mullet congregated and all?

MT: Oh, yes.

MJ: That's a good place to catch fish.

MT: Oh, yes. There's docks right down through there. We'd catch quite a few fish there once in a while.

MJ: Okay.

MT: During the fall, especially. Then I'll get some catches down every now and then.

MJ: Okay.

MT: This up in here, dad, did that ever have a name?

RT: No, just a –

MT: Then the Gulf Trailer Park.

RT: You'd just say north of the Cortez Bridge.

MT: But of course, this is Grassy Point along here.

RT: Grassy Point Bayou.

MT: Yes.

RT: Then there's a creek there where they used to make moonshine. (Gator Moore) and Ike

Pierce had a still up there.

MJ: They did?

RT: We called it Ike's Creek there at Grassy Point.

MT: So, that's –

MJ: So that would be –

MT: Just right in here. It runs –

MJ: Out this way?

MT: It just runs right up in here.

MJ: Okay.

MT: It's covered by bushes now. Ike's Creek.

MJ: Ike's Creek. That was Ike.

MT: I-K-E.

RT: I-K-E. Ike Pierce.

MJ: Ike Pierce. [laughter]

RT: Gator Mora pushed his still. [laughter] Boy, I'll tell you, it scared me. I'd go around that thing. [laughter] They'd shoot you if you went in there.

MT: Yes. Shoot across the water. Then on the other side, this is Jones' Bayou. It says Jones', so –

MJ: Okay. It got Jones'. So that one is on there.

MT: Okay. Then just past it is Cobb's. We just call it Cobb's.

RT: Humbugs.

MT: Humbugs, yes.

RT: [laughter]

MJ: Humbug?

MT: Yes. Yes.

MJ: It is Cobb's.

RT: Well, Humbug Cobbs. That was his last name.

MT: Yes.

MJ: What was?

RT: Humbug Cobbs.

MT: His first name was Humbug. We just always called it Humbug's or Cobb's.

MJ: Did he live there in the [inaudible]?

MT: Oh, yes. Well, he had a marina there.

MJ: Oh, he did?

MT: Yes. A lot of the boats, Tink and a lot of them, would have their boats pulled out there, the bigger boat, Anna Dean, and several of them. They would take them down there to get them painted.

RT: Boat ways, pull them way up in there and [inaudible].

MJ: So, where's Mr. Cobbs now?

RT: Well, I don't know. He sold out and left. Nobody seemed to keep up with his –

MT: Whereabouts.

RT: – whereabouts after he took off. His daddy's the one that built it. Then Humbug, the son, got it when his daddy died. Well, he was quite a drinker.

MT: Yes. He'd get drunk.

RT: Then he spent the money. Then he sold it so he could keep on drinking. I guess he's probably dead by now.

MJ: All right. Okay.

MT: Then School Key is off out here.

MJ: Now, this whole thing used to be called School Key, didn't it?

RT: That's right.

MJ: Key Royale.

RT: Yes.

MT: Yes.

RT: Yes. That's all School Key.

MJ: That was all School Key when –

MT: Right.

RT: Anna Maria Bayou.

MT: Yes. All out here was a School Key flat. But what was this up in here? Wasn't that different before they pumped it in?

RT: Oh, it's called one of the heads of Anna Maria Bayou.

MT: Yes.

MJ: But it had one up in here too.

MT: Yes. It's all different now.

MJ: You could catch a lot of mullet around here, couldn't you?

MT: A lot of mullet, and all up in here. All down here.

RT: All in that bayou there, Anna Maria Bayou. Before they changed it, that was the –

MT: Boy, that was –

RT: – mullet-catchingest place there was.

MT: See right here, right in here, this used to make a real big bayou up in here. That was the home of the mullet, just about. You could go there about any time to catch fish. But they pumped it all in.

MJ: Oh, yes. I see. So, when they build in all these canals now, the mullet can go up in there. They won't be in this.

RT: Well, they pumped it so deep. They dug dirt out of that. They closed up both ends, pumped the water out of the bayou, and trucks went way down in that hole. They dug it so deep,

I don't know if you can find it with an anchor rope. [laughter] Boy, it's deep there in that thing.

MJ: Really? I'll be darned.

RT: That's the best fishing place that was on the coast.

MT: Yes. They really fouled that up.

RT: Then they outlaw commercial fishermen to make up for the mistake and destruction that all this mess created.

MJ: So, you can't fish in Anna Maria Bayou anymore?

MT: No. It's against the law now.

RT: No.

MJ: But you could? You used to?

RT: Oh, yes.

MT: Oh, yes.

RT: There's mullet in there all the time.

MT: Well, it was mostly shallow in there.

RT: Yes, it was.

MJ: Yes.

RT: Just had a few deep spots around. Boy, that was a mullet.

MT: Oh, yes, it was. A lot of folks caught a lot of fish there.

RT: It wasn't commercial fishing.

MT: Is this where (Leebar's staabs?) was?

RT: In Palma Sola? That was at Palma Sola.

MT: Okay. You always told me Leebar's was out here.

RT: I don't know. I thought it was at this (Price's Slough?). Most staabs lives there. (Alvee Taylor?) used to strike there. That's what he called Leebar's staabs.

MT: Up in here?

RT: Yes. At Price's Slough there, about half a mile from there.

MT: Okay. This is Price's Slough right through here.

MJ: Right there?

MT: It's deep from here, and then it comes right on out like so. It's a natural channel. It's called Price's Slough. Then there was some staabs run out in here this way.

MJ: What do you mean stabbs?

RT: From the dock [inaudible].

MT: Docks.

MJ: Oh, okay.

MT: The dock washed off, and then it was just staabs out there. It was called Leebar's staabs.

MJ: Leebar's?

MT: Yes.

MJ: Would that –

MT: B-A-R-S.

RT: A-R-R-S.

MJ: Leebar's staabs.

RT: Yes.

MT: Everybody was always racing to go to Leebar's stabs [laughter].

RT: Then to Price's Bayou. See, that's right there.

MT: Yes. This is Price's Bayou here.

RT: They messed it up too. Boy, that used to be a mullet place. Soon as they built them condominiums and all that old fluid and fertilizer, this and that and the other washed off in it. It used to be deep out in it. Now, it's all filled with a bunch of muck.

MT: It's full of gunk.

MJ: That's when they put in the Perico Bay Club?

MT: Yes, yes. Right, right.

RT: Yes, ruined it.

MT: That's what happened.

RT: Absolutely ruined it.

MJ: Price's Bayou?

MT: Yes.

RT: Yes.

MJ: Okay.

MT: Now, this down through here.

RT: Clarke's Shore.

MT: Yes. That was the Clarke's Shore.

MJ: Clarke's Shore?

MT: Yes.

MJ: Why was it called Clarke's Shore?

RT: Fellow Clarke used to live down on this end here. That's where they had that dock. It was there. He lived up there next to a Mr. Price. Pretty close to him. That was back in the early twenties.

MJ: In the twenties?

RT: He's lived there. Then they moved away, but some of these old-timer fishermen knew him and just called it Clarke's Shore. Just got to be a term they applied, doesn't it?

MJ: Again, was this a good place to catch mullet?

RT: It was then. See, since then they pumped up a big old hole.

MT: Yes. See, they put that Perico Bayou Marina in here.

MJ: Right.

MT: It just ruined things.

RT: That was dredged and a big hole off here. They pumped that island up.

MT: Yes. Right off this spoiled bank here, it's really deep out there. It's probably twenty-five, thirty feet deep.

RT: It's just mud.

MT: Just pumped it way down to pump in causeway.

RT: Some of the field.

MT: Yes.

MJ: So, part of it was the causeway, the marina?

MT: Yes, the marina. Yes.

MJ: Just a lot of development in that area kind of ruined it.

RT: Yes, yes.

MT: A matter of fact, right in here, from here, for about, I'd say, seven, eight hundred yards, there's an Indian mound down through there. They just about wiped that Indian mound out. But there's still some Indian artifacts. You can find some pottery and stuff. Over here is the same thing. They pushed it down and used those Indian mounds for fill dirt.

RT: Yes. The commercial fishermen get the blame for –

MJ: Right.

MT: Yes.

RT: – the ecological destruction of this area.

MT: But that's what's happened. This in here, you can still find a lot of conks with a hole knocked in the end of it where the Indians –

RT: Well, that's just at the point of the Cortez –

MT: Yes. This was another place where they –

RT: – Peninsula here. They dredged it all out.

MT: That was –

RT: Indian mounds.

MT: That was all Indian mounds in there. As kids, we used to go and play on top of them.

RT: They don't care about no artifacts.

MT: This down through –

RT: (Artichokes either?).

[laughter]

MT: This down through here is Seven Pines.

MJ: This one?

MT: Yes.

MJ: Right through here?

MT: Yes.

MJ: Seven Pines.

RT: There used to be some seven pines that grew on the shore years ago. They named it after that.

MT: That was a famous place for catching fish.

RT: It makes clear out almost –

MT: Runs at both end.

RT: – to the channel. It goes out from Manatee River to the Gulf. That's –

MJ: So, would fish coming out of the river congregate there?

MT: Oh, yes.

RT: Yes.

MT: We still catch a lot of fish out there on high tide.

MJ: Well, let's go back. When was the last time you caught a good bunch of fish at Clarke's Shore?

RT: About ten years ago.

MT: [laughter]

MJ: Ten years ago?

MT: It's got to where there's a lot of cats on there.

RT: Right here at Perico Bayou. That used to be one of the fishiest places on this coast too. It since has almost collapsed.

MT: Well, there's hardly any grass on it at all.

MJ: Really?

MT: There's very little grass. It used to be solid, the turtlegrass. Now, there is none. There's very little grass in there.

MJ: I mean, there's no development along these shores, is there?

RT: No. They put a stop to it. But there's development up here, and that tide runs through that.

MT: Yes. All this water in this bay goes through here.

MJ: From Palma Sola Bay, it goes through Perico Bayou.

MT: Out here and out here. All the water here runs this way, with the exception right here on this corner. It'll cut this way. All the tidal going this way, most of it runs through here.

MJ: It goes north. That's strange. You would think it would be going that direction.

MT: Yes, it don't. It does come out here, but it runs very strong down through there. It's got to where it's so darn shallow, you can't hardly get through there.

RT: Well, it carries all that fertilizing mess off of these. This development –

MT: Yes. They dredged all of this. Popeye's Cut, that's another place.

MJ: Popeye's Cut goes in the Perico Bayou.

MT: Yes. That's Popeye's.

RT: It goes just up to the bridge here of Manatee Avenue. That's as far as it goes. Then it gets

shallow up in here.

MJ: So, it comes through up here?

MT: Yes, yes.

RT: Up to the channel.

MT: It runs all the way out to the channel out here.

MJ: Okay. Yes. I've heard a lot about Popeye's Cut.

RT: Be sure to get that Perico Bayou there.

MT: Well, it's there.

MJ: It's on here.

MT: It's on there, dad.

RT: Oh, you got it?

MJ: I want to get the names –

RT: Oh, okay.

MJ: – that you have that they don't have.

MT: Yes.

RT: Okay. You got Bird Key?

MJ: No.

RT: All right. Bird Keys.

MT: It's a little key out there.

RT: There it is.

MJ: Is this the [inaudible]?

MT: Yes. That's it. It's Bird Key.

RT: Boy, there's a lot of [inaudible] too.

MT: Back in the good old days, they'd stop-net Bird Key. The Tink and all them guys were always stopping Bird Key. On this shore, all this from about right here to up here is Tyler's Bend.

MJ: Tyler's Bend?

MT: Yes.

MJ: Now, again, why was it Tyler's Bend?

RT: Oh, Tyler used to have a dairy close to there. Folks named Tyler. They just picked up that name because they had a bunch of cows. [laughter]

MJ: Yes. There was cows all up in there. That was Tyler's Bend.

RT: The next place with a logical description, of course, is just the head of Palma Sola Bay.

MT: Yes. This is all Palma Sola.

MJ: Okay. But why is this important, though, the head of Palma Sola Bay? I mean, again, is this a good place to catch fish?

MT: Well, Tink used to come in here. No one does it anymore. He used to run a net all the way across this and haul this whole – see, it's deep. Most of all this water, with the exceptions right along the shoreline all the way around, is all deep out there. He'd haul that whole thing out.

MJ: He would?

MT: Yes, sure would. He'd catch the daylights out of the pompano and permit trout. Boy, I mean, he'd murder fish up there. I still catch quite a few up there on occasion, but the catfish are taking it over.

RT: Well, them jet skis.

MT: Skis, jet skis.

MJ: Oh, yes. Because everyone else comes this way and everything.

MT: Yes. Oh, yes. They're so thick in there now, you can't hardly get your net overboard, much less find anything. (Jet skis get the credit?).

MJ: What do you think Tink would say if he saw all those jet skis [laughter] out there?

MT: Oh, he'd probably start shooting with his Pelican shotgun. [laughter] He had an old shotgun he called Rust. Hand me old Rust.

MJ: [laughter] I mean, to haul that whole thing, how big a crew would he have to have?

MT: He had seven or eight fellas.

MJ: Seven or eight fellas?

MT: Yes. He'd haul it with the donkeys, see. They have the donkey. They'd run that pole in a skiff. They'd shove it out there with them deep nets. He'd haul a whole mess out. Boy, he'd tear up the fish. But I still get good catches. See, there's a deep hole over here that they pumped up to fill this causeway in. But along here, there's a little seawall. That old seawall has been there since I was a kid.

RT: Since I was a kid.

MT: Yes. So, I've caught a lot of fish right in here, and every once in a while, some here. But mostly down this shore anymore. But it got to be a lot of catfish in it.

RT: Is that why you're going up the river?

MT: Well, you haven't got anything else there, do we?

RT: No.

MT: Okay.

RT: You're going up here?

MT: Yes.

RT: They got Warner's Bayou on there, didn't they?

MT: Yes.

MJ: We've got Warner's Bayou.

RT: Yes.

MT: They don't have right here the Cattle Dock Cove.

MJ: Cattle Dock Cove, yes. That's somewhere up there.

RT: Back in the early part of the century, they had a big old dock there. They bring cows here at the butcher and haul them out. Mostly it's hauling them out. Haul them over to Tampa and put them on them trains that haul them north. They didn't have no railroad down here, so they'd load them there and take them on a boat to Tampa and put them on cars and ship them. So, they got the name Cattle Dock.

MJ: That's right near the De Soto Monument.

MT: Yes, just right around the point.

MJ: Yes.

MT: They used to bring in a truck and park it here. They would carry those fish through when it was real bad in Northwestern. They'd carry the fish through the woods and haul them on the truck and take them to Cortez. I sank right here.

MJ: In here?

MT: Yes. Right there, about fifteen feet of water in a hard Northwestern.

MJ: Fifteen feet?

MT: Yes.

RT: Yes.

MJ: Did you have any fish on the boat?

MT: No, just me and another boy. We was trying to get home, and two seas busted way over the top of the boat.

RT: All that in there is irrelevant to us.

MT: Yes. Of course, this is the cutoff. It's what we've always just called the cutoff. This ditch that goes through here.

MJ: Okay. Do you fish in Terra Ceia?

MT: Yes. We catch quite a few fish over there. I don't remember this name.

RT: Yes, yes. Emerson's, that's what they call it there.

MT: Yes, Emerson.

MJ: Emerson.

RT: Okay.

MT: But now there's a little bayou up in here.

RT: The Emerson's Bayou.

MT: Okay. That's Emerson.

MJ: That's Emerson's Bayou?

RT: Yes. We used to stop that thing.

MT: How about this other little bayou?

RT: They all call it Emerson's.

MT: Yes.

RT: This is [inaudible].

MT: They got another name for this one up here.

RT: Yes. That's –

MT: Not Champlain.

RT: We used to just call it old Clam Bar Bay. I don't know now.

MT: I think –

RT: Clam Bar Bayou.

MT: I think this is Champlain. But there's a bar that runs way down through here, all the way across like that, and they just call it Clam Bar.

MJ: Oh, really?

RT: There's Clam Bar Bay.

MT: Yes.

RT: There's Clam Bar Bayou.

MJ: Yes.

RT: I mean, that's what the fishermen call it. Now, what they named it somebody else, I don't know.

MT: Yes. I think that they call it Champlain now.

MJ: Champlain. Okay.

RT: Hey, we didn't say anything about Prices Key when we was going by [inaudible].

MT: Yes. It says Prices Key right there.

MJ: Yes. It's got Prices Key right there.

MT: Yes. It's got that on there.

RT: Okay. All right.

MT: That's where old man Price used to live. They made moonshine there.

MJ: Right on the tip there?

MT: Yes.

MJ: Not on Prices Key, but on the tip there?

MT: No, right there. Yes. Right there is where Mr. Price's house was. He had a dock out in front of it and a little seawall.

MJ: So, he had moonshine too?

MT: Well, Gator and them made moonshine up there.

[laughter]

MJ: So, they made moonshine up there?

MT: Yes. They [laughter] –

MJ: Did they have to move the still all the time or –

MT: Well, what had happened is they'd get after him. They'd just jump overboard, let the boat keep running. They'd jump overboard, swim shore, and then go to a phone and call in and say, "Somebody stole my boat." [laughter] They'd have to give them their boat back. [laughter] Keep their moonshine, but [laughter] –

MJ: It would be a long swim sometimes, wouldn't it?

MT: Oh, yes. He didn't give a hoot.

RT: Them old people who lived on that island called it Price, but it was Priest.

MJ: That's right.

RT: They were from Germany.

MJ: Right.

RT: Priest was their real name, but everybody cut it short to Price because it was easier to pronounce. When I was a kid, I'd go fishing with my daddy around there. I've seen them two old people. They come out on that dock. My sister and I would go fishing with my daddy. They'd give us cookies.

MJ: They would?

RT: We're scared of them because they're Germans.

[laughter]

RT: The Germans are highly unpopular because World War 1 hadn't been over too long right there around 1930. Shoot, it hadn't been ten or twelve years. Boy, we said, "Daddy, they may be poisoned." [laughter]

MJ: Wouldn't eat their cookies. [laughter]

MT: Who was the guy – oh, we'll get that back in a minute. Okay. This is all Clam Bar. Now, we can get on up in there. This is Terra Ceia Point.

RT: There's Terra Ceia Point and Terra Ceia Bayou.

MT: Yes.

MJ: Okay.

MT: Okay. This is Hot and Tot.

MJ: Hot and Tot?

MT: Yes.

MJ: Is it this area right here?

MT: Yes, Hot and Tot Bayou.

RT: Yes, yes.

MJ: How did it get Hot and Tot Bayou?

MT: [laughter]

RT: Well, there's some old guy who used to live around there. (I wonder what is in that place?). They call him Hot and Tot. He was Spanish.

MT: Oh, that's in Africa.

MJ: Right.

RT: But there's someplace where they call them Hot and Tot.

MT: Africa.

RT: I think it was a Spanish possession. Africa used to be carved up by European nations.

MJ: Right.

RT: He came from that area, so they called him where he came from, Hot and Tot. [laughter]

MT: So, that's Hot and Tot Bayou.

MJ: Good place to catch fish?

MT: Yes.

RT: It was.

MJ: What time –

MT: They still catch fish there.

RT: Yes.

MJ: What time of year?

MT: Basically, all year round. The only time you can catch fish in there is on high tide because it gets low quick.

RT: What does that say?

MT: Critical Bayou.

RT: Well, that's what this was.

MT: Yes. That's critical –

MJ: This is Flounder Pass.

RT: Oh, (I used to get in there?).

MJ: Here's Sister Keys again.

RT: Yes.

MJ: I notice, here's Little Bird Key, and here's another Bird Key.

MT: Yes.

RT: Yes. The one in Palma Sola.

MJ: Yes.

MT: Yes. That's the Bird Key.

RT: Well, there's one across the bay, Bird Key.

MT: Yes. One over here is called Bird Key

MJ: There must be a lot of birds.

MT: Well, they just didn't have any other name to call it.

RT: They got McGill's Pass here?

MT: No.

MJ: No.

MT: This right here is McGill's Pass.

MJ: Okay.

RT: Well, that's Big McGill's Pass. This is –

MJ: Little McGill.

RT: – Little McGill's Pass. Man, them mullet used to get in that place. God.

MT: There's kind of a little hole that runs through there. Mullet love to congregate there.

RT: This up here was called Tillis' Bay. What's it got in there now?

MT: It's Tillette Bay.

RT: Is it Tillis?

MT: Yes, Tillette Bay.

MJ: Tillette Bay.

RT: It was Tillis to us. I didn't know the difference.

[laughter]

RT: What is it?

MT: Tillette.

MJ: Tillette.

RT: Tillette?

MT: T-I-L-E-T-T-E.

RT: Oh. I thought it was T-I-L-L-I-S. It's what the fishermen called it.

MJ: This has Custer Bayou.

MT: Yes.

MJ: Custer Bayou?

MT: Yes. That's right.

MJ: Sister Keys, McGill, and –

RT: Oh, that, but he's named Custer. Here's Joe's Island. Is that what it says?

MT: It just says Joe Bay.

MJ: Joe's Bay.

MT: But that's Joe's Island.

RT: Joe's Island.

MJ: This is Joe Mora, right? Was it Joe Mora?

RT: I forgot about who that was named after. Joe's Island is just Joe's Island. [laughter] You

aren't going any farther than your map goes, are you?

MJ: Well, we would like to. But –

RT: All right. This place was called Cream and Honey.

MT: Yes. This is Cream and Honey.

RT: We stopped both of them. There were blue crabs. [laughter]

MT: Yes. Boy, I did. There were some blue crabs there. We go to the Cream and Honey.

RT: Oh, in Terra Ceia Bay, Hells Half Acre.

MT: Yes. [inaudible] in Hells Half Acre.

MJ: Yes. Where is that?

RT: It's right up here in this corner.

MT: Yes. That makes up in there. There's little cuts that run up in there too.

MJ: Okay.

RT: Hells Half Acre, boy, that was [laughter] –

MJ: Why is it Hells Half Acre?

RT: [[inaudible] kings is in there.

MT: Everything in the world would come out there and get in your net.

RT: Catfish and crabs and anything. Anything you didn't want.

MJ: So, if you wanted to catch some mullet up there, you were taking a chance?

MT: Yes.

RT: Yes, you were.

[laughter]

MT: A big chance. But it's changed. I caught some fish in there this last summer.

RT: Yes. They got them ditches.

MT: Yes. They cut ditches through there now.

RT: (Tear them off?).

MT: It used to be all sand.

RT: Now, what does it say there?

MJ: It says Bishop Harbor.

MT: That's Bishop Harbor.

RT: Bishop Harbor. Let's see, Bishop's Harbor. Yes. On the other side, that's Moses Hole. I don't get that far.

MJ: Well, before we go, I want to ask you about Cream and Honey. Why is it called Cream and Honey?

RT: Because it was about like Hells Half Acre.

[laughter]

MT: Just always catching a bunch of junk. So, it was kind of a tongue-in-cheek name.

RT: Yes.

MJ: I see. Okay.

MT: Because the blue crabs over there was famous. You'd run your net overboard. You'd catch four or five hundred head of blue crab in your net. I mean, they'd eat it out the line.

RT: That's back when you had flax linen nets or nylon nets.

MT: Nylon.

RT: They just fill it full and start eating. Just time to get in there, start eating. (Cake day?).

MT: There's a hole right in here. A basin it makes in there. Boy, I mean, we laid the catfish low in that thing [laughter].

RT: [inaudible] some catfish.

MT: All up in there is bad cats.

MJ: Is it bad cats all year round?

RT: Just about [inaudible].

MT: With the exception of cold weather.

RT: But that's when it's real, real cold. But Sister Keys, there's always cats [laughter].

MJ: Has it been that way?

RT: Yes. Well, it wasn't as bad back there in them days as it is now. The cats wasn't as bad. Blue crabs were.

MJ: Okay.

RT: But now the blue crabs have kind of thinned out. The cats have got worse. I guess pollution and everything is drawing them cats around.

MJ: What were you going to say about on the other side of Bishop's Harbor?

MT: Moses Hole.

MJ: Moses Hole?

RT: Yes.

MT: There's another place just the other side of Bishop's. It's a bayou up in there. It's called Moses Hole.

RT: Well, if you head over across the bay, all them places like Scratch Ankle and [inaudible] Key.

MT: Yes, Gator Hole.

MJ: That's what I want to –

RT: Rotten Bottom

MJ: Goose was mentioning Scratch Ankle Key.

MT: Yes.

MJ: I said, "I want to find that place." [laughter]

MT: Oh, it's over here. Scratch Ankle and Gator Hole. Rotten –

RT: Is that the skyway?

MT: That's skyway.

MJ: That's the skyway.

RT: Is that –

MT: Rotten Bottom, Scratch Ankle.

RT: Rattlesnake Key, Tarpon Key.

MT: Rattlesnake, Tarpon.

RT: [inaudible]

MT: Quarantine Dock.

RT: Adams Shore, Bunces Pass.

MT: Bunces Pass.

RT: Oh, Lord, the place.

MJ: So, how far –

MT: (The Steep Bank?).

MJ: I mean, if I get another map, how far do I have to go north?

RT: Oh, clear to Pass-a-Grille.

MJ: Pass-a-Grille?

RT: Get in Pass-a-Grille.

MJ: You guys have fished that far?

MT: Yes, used to. Every once in a while, we still take off.

MJ: What about down this way?

MT: On down –

MJ: They don't like you to fish down here, do they?

MT: Well, I mean –

RT: Not in big batch, but –

MT: Well, I fished down in –

RT: Little Bay? Lemon Bay?

MT: Yes. But what's the ditch that runs through there, the channel that runs through there?

RT: Mango Cut.

MT: Mango Cut. I fished down around Mango. Sometimes a little bit further, but we don't go much.

RT: Oh, that's a rarity. We talk about our grounds from here to down here at New Pass.

MT: Yes. Well, this is Longboat.

RT: Yes.

MT: So, I'll fish down the Big Sarasota because I catch a lot of fish at Joe's Island.

RT: Yes.

MJ: So, are there any other places here?

MT: Oh, yes, yes. We'll get some more here. Of course, everybody knows that's Beer Can Island.

MJ: Yes. But it's not on the map, though.

MT: Okay.

RT: What is that? That got it there, right?

MT: That's Jewfish, yes. That's Sister's Key. All right. From here, right up there, where you see that little land split, there's a little canal or just a ditch. It runs right down the edge of the woods, all the way around to here. It's called Goose's Cut.

MJ: Oh, that's Goose's Cut. Okay.

MT: Yes.

RT: Do you have the Kitchen wrote down? Kitchen?

MT: He knows what the Kitchen is.

MJ: Yes. The Kitchen will be in there.

RT: You got Leffis Key?

MT: Yes. That's –

MJ: Wait. Now, show me the boundaries of the Kitchen.

MT: Okay.

MJ: Yes. Mark them on here. Show me what you think –

RT: But see, there's Cliff's Key. That's another thing.

MT: Yes. You might want to –

RT: That's Cliff's Key, named –

MJ: Cliff's Key. I've never heard anybody put a name to it.

MT: Yes.

RT: An old man used to go out there and live on it.

MT: Cliff Harris?

RT: Yes.

MT: Cliff Harris used to live on it.

MJ: That's the Audubon Rookery now, right?

MT: Yes, yes.

RT: [laughter]

MT: Yes. That was Cliff Harris' home.

RT: [laughter]

MT: [laughter] But the Kitchen –

MJ: He had a house out there that somebody lived on?

MT: Oh, you used to build anything you wanted. You'd just go fix it then. [laughter] Nobody's going to mess with you. If you could stand the skeeters, they could stand them too. [laughter]

Let's see.

RT: It takes in Coon's Key when they stop it.

MT: Yes, yes. When they'd stop it, this is how they'd stop it. It came around like so.

RT: (It used to go clear the tide, is that?)?

MT: Yes. So, there –

MJ: They go clear up the tides on them.

MT: Yes. This is the head of the Kitchen. Everyone always just called that the head of the Kitchen. But this all through here was just called the Kitchen.

MJ: So, the head was up here by the [inaudible].

MT: This right here is the head.

RT: When they stopped the head of the Kitchen, they'd let it go here and run it over there.

MT: Yes. Everything would drain off this way. When they'd stop the Kitchen, they'd come out this way and go ashore here.

MJ: Okay.

MT: Then when they'd stop the head of the Kitchen, they'd let go and cut it off right there.

RT: Well, they had that natural basin there –

MT: Right. Yes. Right in here there's a natural basin that that the fish had settled. My brother and I have caught a snot out of fish there.

RT: Is Coon Key on there, anywhere?

MT: No, I'm going to fix and draw to Coon Key. Right here –

RT: They used to be a bombing target during the war –

MT: That's Coon Key.

RT: That's where the pilots train and train them, and they dropped dummy bombs on that thing. Some of them are live.

MJ: Really?

RT: They blew that thing up.

MT: Well, there are bombs laying on it still to this day. You can go out there and see the fins and everything of them.

RT: What used to be strike there, you get a net full --

MT: This little bayou right in here, up here, right at the end of Long Bar.

RT: Long Bar Bayou is all I've heard.

MT: Well, see Long Bar comes out here, like so, makes like that.

RT: Long Bar.

MT: That's Long Bar. I see, I got Sleepy Lagoon. This is Bishops Bayou.

MJ: Bishops Bayou.

MT: Yes, right in here. This waterway right in here is Bishops Bayou. This is --

RT: (Porter Man's Bin?).

MT: Porter Man's Bin right there in it, being right in there.

RT: Let's see. Well, no, it's not -- Bishops up in here.

MT: Okay. Down there where the Seafood Shack is. That's where the Seafood Shack is, right there.

RT: You mean Moore's?

MT: Moore's, yes.

RT: All right. Right there in Moore's in the corner.

MT: Right in here is Porter Man's Bin.

MJ: Porter Man's?

MT: Yes.

RT: Or better known as Port Sad.

MT: Yes. [laughter]

MJ: Port Sad.

MT: Port Sad would be even better.

RT: Yes. [laughter]

MT: That's Port Sad.

MJ: Why Port Sad?

MT: Well, everybody says you go down there and you just get all sad.

[laughter]

MT: There's Sleepy Lagoon. We always call that up in there, The Buccaneer, just because the Buccaneer Inn was up in there. This is Sleepy Lagoon. Right in here is the Buccaneer. This is Sleepy Lagoon, but right over here is Buccaneer Bayou. We had Miller Bay.

RT: (Alerted?) to that.

MT: Miller Bay.

RT: No, not that bayou, that's the Georgette Bayou up in there. Bishops, where we got caught.

MT: Right here, this right here. That's Black's Point.

MJ: Not Finley's?

MT: No, Finley's is up here.

RT: Yes, but what in the world? Finley's Bayou, that was that.

MT: Yes, Finley's.

RT: Finley's.

MT: Okay. This place up in here, right –

MJ: Finley's.

MT: Right in here. That's Finley's Bayou.

MJ: Okay.

RT: You got to put a number.

MT: Yes, thirty-seven. I'll let him put the number.

MJ: I don't know. Sometimes I can't even read my own writings. [laughter]

MT: Okay, Black Point. So, this is where you come through right here. Right there is the Old Man's Hole.

[laughter]

MJ: The Old Man's Hole?

MT: Yes.

MJ: Who's the old man?

MT: Well, some old man used to come out there and holler at us.

RT: With a shotgun –

MT: He would carry on and try to run us off. We always call him the old man. So, there was a hole right there and a mullet. Boy, you'd get there and you catch the daylights out of them. We call that the old man's hole right here. Then there's the –

RT: You got Cranes Bayou?

MT: No. All of this in here is Crane's Bayou. Wait a minute. It takes way on how far it is.

RT: What do they call it?

MT: Some other old crazy thing.

MJ: What was it?

MT: It takes the whole thing up.

RT: We got Whale Key off there?

MT: Yes, Whale Key. It's too bad it don't go on down, because that's the farms and the nursery.

RT: You get old (Harris's Rocks?).

MT: Yes, okay. Right in here is Harris's Rocks?.

RT: The guy Harrison owned that. That was his daddy-in-law – no, his stepdaddy owned it.

MJ: I mean, Harris's Rocks, of course, you wouldn't want to be putting your net over in that

area. Or was there a place where you would want to fish?

RT: Yes, but not with a kicker boat, you'd knocked your prop off.

MJ: Really?

RT: But with a skiff, that's wonderful.

MT: Yes, you can get and they'd catch daylights out of fish, and they'd stop like Harris's Rocks a lot. This is Bayshore Gardens.

RT: Cabbage Point right here.

MT: Yes, Cabbage Point is right here.

MJ: Okay.

MT: This is Bayshore Gardens flat. All this is out here, yes. There's Bowlegs Creek, so we don't need that. The next one would be –

RT: Reagan's.

MT: Reagan's. Okay. You'll find the Reagan's here.

RT: Hey, Mark. A millionaire used to live there back in the twenties.

MT: Yes, it makes a hole up in here, like so –

MT: The channel. That right there is Reagan's.

MJ: Okay.

RT: c all there with a haunted house.

MT: 1:08:51.6 , yes. 1:08:51.6 , Manatee County line. 1:08:51.6 is –

RT: It's designated by fishermen as the haunted house.

MJ: It was?

RT: It is.

MT: The old man (Crosley?) lived there, but we call it haunted house. [laughter] Old Crosley. Yes.

RT: Yes. Man, I'll tell you what an old guy or old woman come out there in that hat, you'd look

back up there, and she wouldn't be there. Serious. She's sitting there on the sea wall one night by herself looking down at me, and she looked just like a woman I found drowned over on the beach, just like her, hair stringing. I said, "Hi, there." She says, "Hey." I said, "You want some fish?" "No, thank you." [laughter] Boy, I got out of there.

MT: You turned around, looking, and she was gone.

[laughter]

RT: It's going to hurt going out, [laughter] I'll beat her to it.

MT: Of course, Ringling's is right here. This is Ringling's.

RT: The hole in the wall is next.

MT: Yes, the hole in the wall. The Purple Cow.

MJ: Purple Cow?

MT: That's on down.

MJ: Is that that big purple thing?

MT: Yes. We call it Purple Cow. You can go right on down this side, it is the farms, and the nursery.

RT: Corey's Dock, Corey's Point.

MT: Corey's Dock, Corey's Point.

RT: Yes, there used to live there named Corey, the boathouse there.

MT: Corey's Dock is first, and then Corey's Point is on down, then farms, then the nursery, then the Country Club Shore, then (Golf?) Cut.

RT: We call it (Goldies?).

MT: [Goldie's 00:38:11] Cut, yes, and then New Pass.

MJ: Do you remember the Ringling's?

MT: Oh, yes. I used to be with my daddy. They'd have an old yacht come up there. We'd have a (strap along?) there. They didn't bug you. That Captain comes earn that pretty uniform, Mr. and Ms. Ringling, lead them up them steps in there. Boy, and they were dressed up fit to kill.

MJ: Were they?

RT: Man, I just looked with awe.

MT: Mr. and Mrs. Crosley –

RT: Yes.

MT: – is always coming and speak to you.

RT: Them folks come down there and treat you just as nice.

MJ: They would?

RT: It's strange how the burglars come down here and change what [inaudible] used to the (tin can?) tourists that they might likely lease do now. The guy down that trailer park right there was named Joseph Sty, S-T-Y. He's one that developed it, and he died, and his wife sold it to them present owners. When he found him dead – and this was about 1943 or [19]44, he had 150 pound of trout in his boat. He liked the hooking line.

MJ: Really?

RT: Boy, he could catch them trout.

MJ: 150 pounds?

MT: We forgot one place, the cut that runs up there.

RT: Where?

MT: Up in the head of the Kitchen. Now, I keep –

RT: (Strats?)?

MT: Strats Cut. This is Strats Cut.

MJ: Strats Cut?

MT: Yes.

RT: Goes through the woods.

MT: (Strat Corsi?) .

RT: Named after the guy that lived there.

MT: Yes. His –

MJ: Wyman's?

MT: Yes, Wyman's.

MJ: Wyman?

MT: Wyman's daddy?

RT: Yes.

MT: He dredged that thing. He had a yacht. You could see him coming up. Here he comes. But he dredged that hole through those woods up to his house up in here.

MJ: He did?

MT: You could see him here he come, chuga-chuga-chuga-chuga right on through the woods.

RT: Drunk.

[laughter]

RT: He'd bump the [inaudible].

MT: Banging against the trees.

RT: He wouldn't go fast.

MT: No. He'd chug-chuga-chuga. He'd wave at you, friendly as Dickens, but that was Strats Cut. There was one place –

RT: Him and the kids had nothing to do with each other.

MJ: They didn't?

RT: No, sir. No, it was something that estrangement between – let's see, there was Lena and another girl and Stratton Wyman, four of them. When they got out of school, they just ostracized them. The old man, old lady, go out there and get drunk, anchor off Titus Island, and stay out there a few days and [inaudible] chuga-chuga-chuga back up to their house. They wouldn't bother nobody. They're damn kids. I think they were ashamed of them or something. I don't know. He was an attorney, and he never could make it hit it big. He had the ability, but that bottle just ruined it.

MJ: Homestead are here, didn't they

RT: Yes, first.

MJ: Yes, first?

RT: Then he sold it to the Eisenhower's.

MT: [inaudible]

[laughter]

We call them the Eisenhower's. Just to get a kick out of that. How you Eisenhower's doing, and they laugh.

RT: Yes. When we were in high school, I remember those school bus, Terry, Stratton, Wyman, Felina, up there. You know, they'd get off down here and have a walkway up in the woods. That thing just as wild. Man, it was thick up there.

MT: When I was a kid, we used to go in there and hunt alligators. There was a 16-foot alligator right in there.

RT: It had an unusual kind of wood on that point called Cork. It was like a cork wood. I forget the name of it. You can pick up a whole tree, and it had them trees all over it.

MJ: Really?

RT: Real light wood, just like cork. I forget what they call it. They went down there and bulldozed everything out down there and mess the Indian Mountain, all in nature, just about everything

MT: Just about all the –

MJ: I just wonder if the Indians were utilizing that wood along with –

MT: Probably making, yes.

MJ: – or they made use of that.

RT: They can make them boats and rafts.

MT: Those Indians stayed there for a long, long time.

RT: You couldn't sink that wood. They could make them –

MT: Balsa. Probably, balsa.

RT: Man, it's just like a cork. We used to cut it up and make us something to paddle around, get

one of the limbs. [laughter]

MT: Imagine you make a dugout out of it.

MJ: Yes. Stuff like that. Tell me about the woman you found drowned. When did that happen?

RT: That was in 1941. She was floating along the edge of the water down at – the water at Longboat Pass Bridge, about a mile this side. I was on the other side. I struck a wood [inaudible]. I saw her down there and went and got the constable. Back then they didn't have a cop. They had a constable in the justice of the peace. When I got in, we went down there and pulled her out. He found her car up there and had a note in it. She swum way off and couldn't get back to commit suicide. She was depressed, and that's what startled me about seeing that woman down that haunted house. It looked just like that woman that we pulled out that surf, and I just look like it's almost reincarnation. I wasn't going to take no chance. Maybe she's back to get me for pulling her out.

MJ: Well, since we're on that subject, are there any other ghost stories that I should know about, out there on the water or in the surrounding areas, or any ghost stories about that?

RT: Yes, but it was always human beings connected with it. They had spooky fisherman like up there at Clark Shore. Mr. Clark used to have a dock out there. When I was growing up, teenager, and it's pretty good size dock, had cover and everything. The guys are stopping at down Clark Shore right on the land side of the north bridge, the mainland side. They stopped in that shore, went in the bridge, and he fell. There wasn't nothing there, just a shore and that dock. They go up there to sleep at night, get out of dew and rain. They had two or three guys and a couple of crews, it was spooky. So, one or two of them get up there and get up in the loft and let them go up there and started making their nest, making all kind of noises. Scare them off. They get out of there, wouldn't even stay. [laughter] There's things like that just went on constantly. They scare each other. Some of these fishermen, a lot of them were superstitious about black cats. There's one here, (Gator Moore's?) brother, (Joe Moore?), and that's (Trigger's?) granddaddy. He'd be going down the dock, a black cat would cross his path, and he'd turn right around and go home. He wouldn't go fishing, no sir. Or –

MT: Gator was the worse than any of [inaudible].

RT: They had something, they dreamed, and if they dreamed certain things about a cat or something like that, they wouldn't go fishing for nothing in this world. Then, (Tink Fulford?), he had a superstition. He came in on Friday night or Saturday, he'd pull in nets out. He'd go fishing Sunday night, but he'd pull him nets out to come in Saturday night.

MJ: You would never leave nets in the boat overnight.

RT: Not over Sunday.

MJ: Not over Sunday.

RT: Another thing too, If he went out there and had a bad stop, he put in a stop and he thought, there's a lot of fish, and it didn't catch him, he'd make that crew line and pull them nets out, go home, sleep all night. Next day, they'd pull them right back on again and go back fishing. So, that's change of luck. All those superstitions used to be abundant around here. They have certain things, you'd see the wind blowing a certain way, the moon had a ring around it, they wouldn't go fishing, all those theories.

MT: Well, Gator, I fished with him several years back. I'd come down with a watermelon one day. I was going to put it on the boat, take it fishing. He wouldn't get on the boat.

MJ: Not with a watermelon. [laughter]

MT: He says, "We'll get out there and sink. We'll all die." I found it was very unusual when we were over at Egmont, and I was always jumping in the water, playing or doing something. I found a small gopher, and he was swimming in in the water, which is very unusual, and I scooped him up, and I was back there playing with him. Unbeknownst to Gator, he come back there. He says, "What you got?" I says, "I got a gopher, a baby gopher." He says, "Son, if you don't throw that thing overboard right now I'm going to jump overboard." He says, "We won't get ashore. We're going to die before we get to shore." He says, "I'm serious." He made me throw the gopher overboard. He was really, really superstitious.

MJ: Now, tell me when you say gopher, you mean gopher tortoise?

MT: The Florida Gopher, the land tortoise.

MJ: The land tortoise, okay. That's just to clarify the tape.

MT: Yes. [laughter]

MJ: Some people hear that and they'll say, "Gopher?"

MT: Right. That's the land tortoise.

RT: Well, back there when I was growing up, there were a lot of things that happened, like alligators. We'd be hauling creeks, like (Bolles?) Creek or Warner's Bayou [inaudible]. There are alligators in there, and they'd be all around our nets. I never shot the first one.

MJ: Really?

RT: They get after the fish. They never did chase us. My daddy, he gets some on the tails and sling on my shoulder or something, and I almost get bit, and but that wasn't as dangerous as night fishing and catching rattlesnakes.

MT: Yes.

RT: Boy, I've had rattlesnakes in my net. I tell you some of them had rattlesnake's gill in a six,

eight net.

MT: Farmer gill went in a four-inch net.

RT: Yes.

MJ: Were the snakes going after the fish?

MT: They're swimming across the water. No, they were just swimming. Rattlesnakes swim. They get ready to go from one Key to the next. They'll swim at night a lot. I've seen them swimming. He had it in the fall of year, and he had a four inch net. Boy, that thing, [laughter] old farmer had him [inaudible]. [laughter] He was trying to get that big old or that big old rattlesnake out of that net. He was thrashing and carrying it on. Getting an alligator in the net was a mess. Boy, they'd roll up, roll that net for 30 yards. [laughter]

RT: I know they used to kill the gator once a while and eat, but I have never seen nobody kill one. I've been around plenty times hauling up the nets, catching fish and then gators all around you. I've never seen one ever try to catch them, me, daddy or whoever I was with. But them snakes are different, so different.

[laughter]

MJ: As it would be.

RT: I was always more afraid of snakes than I was alligators.

[laughter]

They don't have no respect to person. Falling out them bushes around your neck, or they smell fish and them old big red boxes about four or five feet long, get up there and clambering to get in your boat. I tell you, it makes your hair stand up.

MT: I tell you. Another thing is them big coons trying to get in your boat, to get your fish.

MJ: Really

MT: I've had as high as nine of them trying to get my boat at one time. Me, I'd hit them with my [inaudible]. [laughter]

RT: Another problem you don't have. We don't have it anymore. When I was growing up, you had to get overboard all the time with stock net, gill net, any kind of net, you got overboard. Them stingrays, it was common around here for fishing. We get almost killed them stupid stingrays, not me one of them. My daddy, I have never seen nobody get – is that one of their words, mama tucked like he has with stingrays. Great days of [inaudible] popped him and he'd almost bleed to death. They'd cut an artery in his leg and hurt.

MT: They'd be hurt.

RT: It's worse than dying.

MJ: What would you do? How would you fix? What would you use for the medicine or –

RT: You'd put in some hot water and ask the good Lord to help you.

[laughter]

MJ: That is about all you could do.

RT: That all you had. Sometime they had some kind of stuff, it was purple. I don't remember what it was.

MT: Is that stuff they used for bull or for bulls when they cut them, or cows when they have some kind of sword? It's a purple medicine. It's good for anything.

[laughter]

MT: It's a disinfectant.

RT: I've seen me hurt, but it didn't hurt as bad as almost watching somebody else hurt. You've been out there with the guys, and you didn't even have a stove to make no hot water, didn't have nothing. Then they're groaning and, Lord, have mercy. Blood is squirting up and it scares them so bad. Well, you got to do something, and you go get a tourniquet to stop the blood. But, boy, they hurt.

MT: It does hurt. I got stung.

MJ: So, if somebody got stung like that, would you take them to shore?

RT: Yes, take them to shore, or somewhere quick as you could. Lord, I was at Palma Sola Bay one day, and that guy knows a guava jelly plant lives or has a dock out there. Buster – no, his name is Watson, Sam Watson. We were overboard working our nets up directly one gathers him in the leg boy. I mean, he was a holler. I tell you about where that dock and Smith took him. [laughter] He didn't want no more overboard. Sam, you couldn't finish them overboard.

MT: It does hurt. I got stung in the leg. One of them stuck me in the leg.

RT: I used to go fishing with an old fella here (Harvey?) Taylor, it's Paul Taylor's daddy. He loved it. I thought a lot of him too. He tried to get me and my cousin (Moon Pringle?) get overboard pulling net around to work the fish up because he wouldn't hit. He said, "Well, Mr. Harvey –" I call him brother, [inaudible]. "Why don't you get on board too?" He said, "(Dr. Chilton?) told me, it's against me." We looked down at him staring, yes, [laughter] it's against us too. We wouldn't get on overboard. Now, we quit it all together. The more you get

overboard now, it will cause your boats on ground about that much water. There is no stingray.

MT: I tell you, fishing has really changed. See today, you don't have to pull your net out and spread them. Most of the time, you don't mend them, you don't lime them. You don't have to hang them yourself, somebody usually does that for you. You don't have to work on skiffs and scowls and net spreads. You said to build your own net spreads and keep them up and paint your own boats and turn them over and mend your net and hang your net and lime your net. Good night, I tell you, you don't do one half the work by no means you used to do to fish.

MJ: That's right.

MT: Fishing has certainly changed.

MJ: You think it's changed the fisherman?

MT: It has. It's changed them. But the thing that it is back there then you were dependent on a captain, and more guys could make it, because that captain was a top notch fisherman, and he could make a living for you back in the thirties or forties, when you didn't need but \$20, \$25 a week. But now you got to be a good fisherman, each fellow or you aren't going to make it, because you got to get out there and make it yourself. The guy that's with you, if he isn't going to help you to make it by seeing fish or helping you get them out and get the boat up and take care of things with you, you aren't going to make it either, if you got an old lazy bone with you. So, it's got to be more self-reliant than it used to be –

MJ: More individualistic.

MT: Yes, it used to – we always looked up a job with the best captain, even if he was hard to get along with, and everyone who made money was the devil to get along with.

MJ: They were.

RT: No, grouchy.

MT: You'd go with him as long as you could stand it. Then, you'd have to quit. Then, you stay off maybe six months, then you come back and you were new again, and he treats you good. Then, after about three or four months, he starts cussing you and abusing you, and you'd have to quit again.

MJ: Well, somebody said that the good captains always had a list. If you wanted to get on with that crew, you had to sign a list. You sign your name on the list, and then he says, "Well, when I get down to your name, then you can get on the crew." Is that true?

RT: I never did hear about a list, except in their mind, they always had their minds made up that certain fishermen would help them take care of their net. They'd mend it good. They'd help take care of the boats. You had to save the fish. A lot of (Dunces?) out there, and you got big fishing net. They just pick it up, dump the fish, and all kind of mess. They'd find out who was the good

fisherman. Who could pull a skiff good, who could take care of the net, who could save the fish scooping, and who would mend their net good, and who would help him see the fish? Well, he wanted that guy fishing with him if he could get him, and that helped him, because, boy, they expected you to see some fish too.

MJ: So, there was competition among the crew to get on with a good captain.

RT: Yes.

MJ: But the good captains wanted good crew too.

RT: Yes. They will say it was good. You had to get in line to get a job with them, except after a while, when they got [inaudible] can mean with nobody hardly want fish with them, like (Charlie Guthrie?), then I'd fish – [laughter]

MT: Spanish rocks. Aren't they running here?

RT: [inaudible] If they're still there, they'd get covered up.

MT: I got three places here outside. I just remembered. This is the Spaniard rocks. This is Whitney's.

RT: Whitney's rocks, yes.

MT: This is target range.

RT: They used to be when they would shoot that place in in World War II.

MT: They'd drag it. They'd pull a thing behind the airplane, and they'd shoot at them. Right over here is where they'd pull that big old plane and then, fighter plane.

RT: They're in a skiff –

MT: And the [inaudible] are flying.

RT: They'd be coming in your boat, just like somebody poured them in there.

MT: Okay. I remember as a little old kid, I thought we're getting shot. [laughter] Dove under the bow.

MJ: They'd let you fish there, even though they were bombing just on the other side of the island?

MT: Well, they're shooting, machine guns, the fighter planes that come in and they told them the target. Then fighters come in and shoot at that target. In .50 caliber machine gun, you can hear [makes sound].

RT: They'd let you put a warning, that sign up there.

MT: If you did it, it was your own.

MT: Yes. That's like them bombs, they'd run you off. If they'd talk about, like over on the cross [inaudible] over there. They'd have stopped them. Here they come in there bombing. They weren't supposed to be there.

MJ: [laughter]

RT: Down there at Coon Key though, it was not unusual to see one of them, P-38s or P-40s to fall right out there in the bay. I've seen several of them fall. So, two of them one day, you run again, here's the pieces kind of fly. We tried to pull it out because we knew the pilot was still in it. That thing was heavier than it look, we couldn't even budge it. Then we just called the Coast Guard, you know, and they got – cleared that he's dead, drowned by then, if he wasn't already dead. There's one that fell right outside of Longboat Pass, wherever that is –

MT: That's Longboat Pass.

MT: Yes. Out here about a mile during the war, and (Albert Few?) was out there. He's doing silver, all that season. He's looking, that guy fell out there. Boy, he had a boy wearing North Africa flying one of them fighter planes. Boy, he had a compassion, man. He told them, guys, he's watching silver. I don't give a hoot. We're going to go out and see if we can save that pilot. He got just – that old boy just about gone.

MJ: Really?

MT: Albert told me, before he died, he said, "Every year that guy sends me a card and thanks me for saving his life."

[laughter]

MJ: That's something. Well –

MT: I think that's about – I can't think of any other.

MJ: This will give us a good start anyway.

MT: Yes.

MJ: What we want of you, what I'd like of you –

MT: Here, we got one more place here, I forgot.

MJ: It's just to take – get a map without all this crap on it, and just have these places on.

MT: That right there is called the swimming hole.

MJ: Swimming hole because you used to swim there?

MT: No, that's where they settle fish.

MT: You settle fish and you and when you pull the net –

MT: You have to swim.

MT: You're in deep water.

[laughter]

MT: You'd have to swim around. So, it was called the swimming hole.

MJ: I want to talk about having questions about some –

MT: We got one more too. I forgot about this. Let's see it runs like so –

RT: (Thigpen?) channel.

MT: Thigpen channel. Did I tell you we went to (Tybee?) Island and looked at that museum?

RT: [negative]

MT: I contacted somebody over there, that lives there, and she sort of – is sort of the public relations person, and they'll give tours. They built the replica of what they thought the thigpen might look like. I think it's a little more, a little fancier –

RT: Elaborate. Yes.

MT: But they've got some photographs in there. It's kind of a nice interpretation, but –

RT: That was a mean bunch of folks of thigpen.

[laughter]

RT: I'll tell you last night.

MT: Yes.

RT: [inaudible] (Risley?) shot right away in that house of (Sue's?).

MT: Killed him.

MJ: This was Mr. Thigpen. He went to trial for that, didn't he?

MT: Yes, but he got off.

MJ: Yes.

MT: They cleared him. They it said it was an accident. They're just playing with a gun. [laughter] Playing with a gun. I don't doubt it. [laughter]

RT: Yes, you're mean.

[laughter]

MJ: But he shot Mr. Risley.

MT: No. This guy got killed.

RT: No, Ms. Risley shot (Jeff Thigpen?).

MJ: She shot Jeff Thigpen?

RT: Yes.

MJ: I didn't know that.

MT: Yes. The other way around. [laughter]

RT: Right away in that big old house right there upstairs.

MT: What was he doing fooling around with Risley was (Damon's?) wife, right?

RT: Well, he hadn't murdered her yet. Later on, he did.

[laughter]

RT: Oh, Lord, what a bunch. A lot of history.

MT: As the world turns. [laughter]

RT: Up here on Anna Maria Bayou right here and about the second mouth. Where's that second mouth?

MT: Right here.

RT: Right here.

MT: Right here.

RT: There's an old guy lived right there named (Swenson?). He's a [inaudible]. He was the only fella around that place down there. He used to offer daddy and I some tea.

MT: Yes, Cooper Tea.

RT: Cooper Tea. Daddy said, "You got any ice?" "No, I haven't." [inaudible] mid-July or August.

MT: Who was the fellow that's trying to give us the puppies?

RT: That was him.

MT: The poopies.

RT: He said, "Well, your little boy" – I was with daddy. He said, "You want to give your little boy some poopies?"

[laughter]

Daddy said, "No. No poopies." Then down here on the Longboat Key, in Cranes Bayou, up in here on the woods, an old man named (Rod Riggers?).

MT: Yes.

MJ: Rod Riggers?

RT: He was Spanish. We call him (Rod Wrinkles?). [laughter] He lived up there. We got some water there, one day. He just had a hole dug in the ground. You imagine that on that island, and it was clear and pretty. Got good water, got good water. We didn't have down there. [laughter] I took a swig. Daddy did too. [inaudible]

[laughter]

MJ: That was a good one.

RT: Man, he did.

MT: His old (brackish myth?).

RT: He'd have a bush, and there are (sea oaks?) come down there beating their skiers right in the middle of the day, everything just to buzzing around.

MT: It's all good.

RT: There's somebody in all them places, like the word, Perico Island there, or Mrs. (Priest?), just there where you can run into somebody, some old recluse that live there, nobody bothered you.

MJ: Nothing like it is today. I mean there was –

MT: No.

MJ: There were so few people that you knew their names.

MT: Or even twenty years ago, you knew most of the folks that lived up and down the water, because they always come out and wanted some fish. There was a lady that lived right along here. Her and her husband had that sailboat –

RT: Yes.

MT: – set out, and they were the nicest folks. Well, the husband died. Now, she's got – not Hodgkin's – got, what's this stuff? Isn't that something?

MJ: Parkinson's.

MT: Not Parkinson's. Where you lose your –

RT: Alzheimer's.

MT: Alzheimer's. I used to go out there after he died. I'd go there and make a set right along that – there's a ditch that runs down here, I've caught lots of fish there. She'd come out and want some fish, and I'd clean them for her. She'd always bring me some flowers or plants, "Here, take them to your wife." "I don't want them." "Yes, you got to have something." So, okay. She'd wrap them up in some wet newspaper, and I'd get them and take them off and then throw overboard. [laughter] But she was really sweet.

MJ: What about the river? You didn't fish the river much?

RT: Yes, years and years ago, before they closed it up and daddy was living.

MT: Way on up.

MJ: You'd come way on up here.

RT: Cypress Bay, Braden Creek, all them places up in there. We didn't catch a lot of fish up here, except right in the dead winter. But along here in Warner's Bayou, hey, that was a fishy place. See, there wasn't nobody living in there, hardly.

MT: That's actually Davis's Point. I never have heard it called McNeil Point. That's Davis's

Point.

RT: But we'd stopped in bayous and haul them out and get plenty of fish. That's the main place that we fish. Daddy, he'd like to go on up there and looking for coon tracks. I didn't care about that.

[laughter]

MT: Cutting cabbages. Yes, granddad loved trap. He was a –

MJ: Did you know the fisherman from Palmetto? Did you have much to do with him, or did they resent you?

RT: Yes, there's always a clash.

MT: Yes, there was a controversy. Yes. (Beth Thompson?) and that bunch.

RT: (Gothies?).

MT: Yes.

MJ: Gothies.

RT: Thompson's and Gothies. I don't know these mothers –

MT: What was the guy you went in the Army with lives out here now?

RT: Pillsbury's.

MT: Pillsbury's.

RT: Yes.

MT: Well, see, the Pillsbury's are kin of my wife. They're cousins and uncles and aunts and all kind of stuff, the Pillsbury was. They've got a fish house there right now, but –

MJ: They also had a boat racks, didn't they?

MT: Yes, they did.

RT: They did on it.

MT: They had a real big –

RT: Fresh water basin where you could put your boat out of the salt water.

MT: They also had a big dredging company, the Pillsbury Dredging Company. The two brothers, or three brothers, and they were kind of quite a crew. But they're all kin to Marvin and my wife's daddy and all that.

RT: One of them flew right there. Bud when –

MT: Bud Pillsbury, yes.

RT: – he got that fish saving place, awesome, that live fish place.

MT: He catches them. He keeps them alive and sells them to somebody. He's big –

MJ: Well, I think one of the Pillsbury came to one of the off meetings.

MT: Yes, that was Bud.

RT: Yes, it's him.

MT: It was Bud Pillsbury. Well, nowadays, see the new class, the new crew, we don't have that controversy, because there's a lot that comes over and fishes. We've gotten to know a lot of them, and the rest of them have moved up this way and fished back this way. But the younger generations don't have the animosity that the older generations did, especially that Beth Thompson – and what was – Herman Thompson. Boy, he was crazy as a coup. He shot – they got out there and got in a fuss one day, and he took his M1 carbine out and started shooting it, shot holes all in the guy's boat. He went to jail over it. But then another guy, run his boat, rammed, and cut another boat half into sunk. They were always doing something crazy. But after Beth and Herman and him died – as a matter of fact that (Timmy Thompson?) is a grandson of Beth.

MJ: He is?

MT: [affirmative]

MJ: I'll be darn.

MT: Because his daddy was Beth's son, and then Herman was his uncle, and all that. Boy, that was a mess. But then, when they moved over here, there was another Thompson boy that moved to Cortez. I can't think of his name now. He was kind of a quiet fellow. He never did – wasn't very noisy. Timmy's dad – what was his name? I can't –

RT: He worked for (Bob?).

MT: Yes. But he was a pretty nice guy. He flew an airplane for a while spotting fish in the Keys. But he died pretty young. He contacted some sort of disease.

MJ: So, Cortez fishermen have quite a range –

MT: Yes.

MJ: – in fishing. I mean –

MT: When I fished with (Farmer Capo?), a lot of times on a Sunday afternoon, we'd leave Cortez and go to St. Pete. We fished Tarpon Key and Cow and Calf and all them places over there, (Rotten Bottom?). We'd stop at Gator, Butler's and Scratch Ankle, and all them places over there. We fished all of that, up in the Tarpon Key.

MJ: So, if you're fishing someplace up, how long would you be gone?

MT: A week.

MJ: That's not a day trip.

MT: We stayed we stayed over there until Friday morning, and we'd come back. When we caught quite a few fish, we'd call. There was a phone on the on the Sunshine Skyway there. We'd go to that phone and call them and tell them we got fish in the truck and we'd unload on the Skyway over here. But down the down the quarantine, off from the quarantine dock, what's that call down at shoreline down there? It had some sort of name. I can't remember it now, but we fished all of that over there.

RT: Scratch Ankle Reef was all out there.

MT: Yes.

MJ: Why is it called Scratch Ankle Key and Scratch Ankle?

MT: Bugs.

MJ: Bugs? [laughter]

RT: Them little [inaudible].

MT: [inaudible] and rascals, they'd come out and they'd make your arms almost black. I mean, they're just in your eyes, ears –

RT: They called something worse than that, Scratch A-S-S.

[laughter]

MJ: That's so [inaudible].

MT: Yes, you hear the cleaned up version.

MJ: Cleaned up version.

[laughter]

RT: That's some [inaudible].

MT: Boy, I mean, there were some bugs over there. Whoopee.

[end of transcript]